

SENATE RESOLUTION 78

By Lamar

A RESOLUTION to honor Clarice Phelps in celebration of Women's History Month in Tennessee.

WHEREAS, the month of March was officially designated as Women's History Month in 1987; and

WHEREAS, every March, Women's History Month provides an opportunity to honor the achievements of those women who have paved the way wherein every person has an opportunity to pursue the American dream; and

WHEREAS, the Volunteer State is proud to be the home of a number of historic, pioneering women, including the awe-inspiring Clarice Phelps, an eminent research scientist who was the first African-American woman involved in the discovery of an element, which is now known as Tennessine (Ts); and

WHEREAS, in 2010, Ms. Phelps began working for the Nuclear Security and Isotope Technology Division at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, where she was a part of the team that helped to purify the Isotope, Bk-249, that would be used to confirm the discovery of element 117, Tennessine, on the periodic table; and

WHEREAS, born in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Clarice Phelps was raised in Nashville and graduated from Tennessee State University, from which she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry; she later received her Master of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering with a focus on Nuclear and Radiation Engineering from the University of Texas; and

WHEREAS, after her time at Tennessee State University, Ms. Phelps proudly joined the United States Navy and served in the Nuclear Power Program, helping to maintain the

chemistry and radiological controls of two reactor plants onboard the aircraft carrier USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) for the carrier's first two deployments to the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, after receiving her honorable discharge from the Navy, she was employed by Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) in 2009, where she worked as a Nuclear Operations Technician at the Radiochemical Engineering Development Center processing and purifying mainline radioisotopes for use in industry, private sector, and various government agencies; and

WHEREAS, a former member of ORNL's African American Resource Council, Ms. Phelps has shared her technical expertise to the Plutonium 238 program for NASA and currently serves as the project manager for the Radiation Signature Training Devices in the Radioisotope Production and Development Group at ORNL and is completing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Nuclear Engineering at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; and

WHEREAS, she has served as a special instructor at the Project G.R.A.D. (Graduation Really Achieves Dreams) Summer institute for high school students in STEAM programs and as a guest instructor at Pellissippi State Community College, in addition to sharing her time and talents in support of after-school educational programs at Austin-East Magnet High School; and

WHEREAS, an active part of her community, Clarice Phelps is a board member and vice president of Yo-STEM, working to bring STEM education to underserved communities; vice president and program chair of the Knoxville graduate chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; and a volunteer at Knox County Career Fairs for middle school students, Science Expos, and traveling science fairs sponsored by ORNL; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to honors and accolades, she received the 2017 Knoxville YWCA Tribute to Women Award, appeared on the cover of *Minority Engineer Magazine*, and was recognized by the International Union for Pure and Applied Chemistry for the Periodic Table of Young Chemists. She was selected for inclusion in Knoxville's Top 40 under 40 and named a 2021 GEM Fellow, completing her internship at ORNL; and

WHEREAS, her many professional accomplishments aside, she is most thankful for the love and support of her husband, John, and her three children, Camryn, Jayson, and Jaxon; and

WHEREAS, in saluting Ms. Phelps during Women's History Month, let us remember that when women succeed, America succeeds, as does Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor Clarice Phelps on her many contributions to the State of Tennessee as we celebrate Women's History Month and the generations of trailblazing women who have built our State and their vital contributions to our country's history.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.